

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015FL223		
Name of Service:	Mother Hubbard's Childcare		
Address of Service:	6 The Avenue Ongar Dublin 15		
Eircode:	D15V9XV		
Name of Registered Provider:	Karen McGovern		
Service type:	Full Day Care		
Date(s) of Inspection:	18/10/2023		
No of pre-school children:	AM	89	PM 40
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate 2 nd Floor, Unit 4/5 The Nexus Building Blanchardstown Corporate Park Ballycoolin Dublin 15 D15 CF9K		
Inspection undertaken by:	C. Harte and S. Murray		
Title:	Early Years Inspector and Inspection Registration Manager		

Authority to Inspect

The Tusla Early Years Inspectorate carries out inspections of Early Years Services under Section 58(J) of the Child Care Act 1991 (as inserted by Section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013).

Conditions if applicable

Not applicable.

Description of service

Mother Hubbard's Childcare in Ongar is one of four services owned by the registered provider. The service offers sessional, full day care and afterschool care. The service operates Monday to Friday 7:30am to 6:30pm. The service participates in the Early Childhood Education and Care (ECCE) scheme. The purpose-built building has seven care rooms. Toddler Room (1 to 2 years), Playschool (2 to 3 years), Preschool 1 (2 to 4 years), Preschool 2 (2 to 4 years), ECCE 1 (2 years 8 months to 5 years) sessional care only used for school aged childcare in the afternoon, ECCE 2 (2 years 8 months to 5 years) sessional care only used for school aged childcare in the afternoon and ECCE 3 (2 years 8 months to 5 years) this care room is closed for the afternoon. There are 3 large enclosed outdoor spaces available. One outdoor area has a partially sheltered roof giving opportunity for outside access in wet weather.

Staffing

There were 17 staff present on the day of inspection including the chef, person in charge, manager of a separate branch and the area manager. All staff except the area manager and chef were observed working directly with the children. The registered provider does not work in the service.

Methodology

Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate is the independent statutory regulator of early years services in Ireland. The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 define the duty of a registered provider to ensure the safety and well-being of children and to comply with these regulations. This Act also gives Tusla the authority to assess compliance with the regulations. The purpose of regulation in relation to early years services is to ensure that the care, safety, and well-being of children attending such services is upheld. Inspections of early years services are planned based on the following:

- Previous inspection history
- Any information received in relation to the service

The findings on inspection are based on:

- Information obtained through examination of documentation
- Direct observation
- Discussion with relevant staff

This inspection was unannounced and focused on the areas of governance, health, welfare and development of child and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation:

Regulation 9 Management and Recruitment,

Regulation 19 Health, Welfare and Development of child,

Regulation 23 Safeguarding the health, safety, and welfare of child.

As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Toddler room and Playschool room.

Inspection findings are documented in the inspection report which is first issued in draft format to the service with an opportunity to respond to any findings. Where statutory requirements are identified as not being met, the registered provider must demonstrate how they have rectified the non-compliance and will prevent any non-compliance from re occurring. The Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan (CAPA) will be used to inform decisions about compliance with regulatory requirements. Where the registered provider fails to meet the statutory requirements an escalation process may be commenced.

The inspectorate reserves the right to edit responses received for reasons including clarity, completeness and compliance with administrative and legal processes.

The contents of the report are compiled by the inspectorate body.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the person in charge, area manager, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that-

- (a) the service has a designated person in charge and a named person who is able to deputise as required,
- (b) at all times during the period when the pre-school service is being carried on, the designated person in charge or the named person referred to in subparagraph (a) is on the premises, and
- (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that each employee, unpaid worker and contractor is suitable and competent taking into consideration the nature of the needs of children, including by-

- (a) consideration of references from the person's past employers, if any, and in particular the most recent employer, if any,
- (b) consideration of references from reputable sources in the case of a person who has no past employers,
- (c) consideration of the vetting disclosure received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 in respect of the person, and
- (d) ensuring, insofar as is practicable, that where a person has lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months, he or she provides police vetting from the police authorities in that state.

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that, without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (2) and subject to paragraphs (5) and (6), each employee working directly with children attending the service holds at least a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

Compliance Information

(1) (a) The service had a designated person in charge and three named persons to deputise as required throughout the inspection. Documentation displayed on the walls listed the management structure and staff on the premises were aware of their role and responsibility.

(b) The designated person in charge was present when the inspectors arrived at the service at 9:45am and was present for the duration of the inspection.

(2) Twenty-two staff files were reviewed on the day of inspection including the person in charge, the chef and bus driver.

- (a) Twenty-eight written and validated references were available from previous employers.
 - (b) Sixteen written and validated references were available from a source other than a previous employer.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available in relation to all twenty-two staff members.
 - (d) Police vetting disclosures were available for thirteen staff members who resided outside the jurisdiction for a period of longer than six consecutive months.
- (4) Evidence was available to show that 20 staff members working directly with the children held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework or a qualification deemed to be equivalent.

Non-Compliance Information

(9)(3) Evidence showed that the procedures specified in paragraph (2) were not carried out prior to seven staff commencing employment.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Required documentation for staff are available where applicable.

Summary Comment

The non-compliance identified under regulation 9 has been addressed.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

- (1) Subject to this Regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that there is at all times an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.*
- (2) Subject to paragraphs (4) and (5), a registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 1 of Schedule 6 opposite a particular reference number specified in column (1) of that Part in respect of the age range of the children specified in column (2) thereof at that reference number is satisfied.*

Compliance Information

- (1) There were eighty-nine preschool children being cared for by fifteen adults on the morning of inspection.
- (2) Ratios were maintained during the inspection. On arrival the inspectors observed the following:

Room	Age range	No. of children	No. of adults present	Adults required
Toddler Room	1-2 years	9	2	2
Playschool room	2-3 years	9	2	2
Preschool 1	2-4 years	18	3	3
Preschool 2	2-4 years	10	2	2
ECCE 1	2.8-5 years	13	2	2
ECCE 2	2.8-5 years	15	2	2
ECCE 3	2.8-5 years	15	2	2

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child

(1) A registered provider shall, in providing a pre-school service, ensure that-

(a) each child's learning, development and well-being is facilitated within the daily life of the pre-school service through the provision of the appropriate activities, interaction, materials and equipment, having regard to the age and stage of development of the child, and

Compliance Information

(1) (a) The following observations are examples on how each child's learning, development and well-being was observed being facilitated during the inspection:

Basic Needs:

- Staff were responsive to the actions of the children, for example when a child tripped in the garden a staff member responded "whoopsie" and approached immediately to assist the child.
- A sink at the child's level was observed in the toddler room. This promoted independence for the children while educating them about hand hygiene.
- Children were given sufficient time to enjoy their meals. This facilitated mealtimes to be a social occasion for children to engage with their peers.
- Spoons were given to children in the toddler room to encourage self-feeding as they received assistance from staff to eat. This encouraged self-care skills.

Supporting Relationships Around Children:

- Staff were observed using gentle tones and positive language during interactions with children. Staff in the outdoor area praised children for actively sharing toys and using gentle hands during play. This modelled positive interactions.
- Staff were observed engaging children in conversation and songs. Continued conversation and interaction support language development.
- Staff demonstrated awareness of children's individual abilities. A staff member was observed supporting a child not yet walking to be involved to play on the slide and ride on cars in the outdoor area with other children.
- Child observations, images of the children's artwork and activity planning was shared on a software application used for communicating with parents/guardians. Partnership with parents/guardians and sharing of learning experiences supports children's wellbeing and development.

The Physical and Material Learning Environment:

- Childrens artwork and photos were displayed throughout the service. Displaying artwork and photos supports children to build confidence and create a sense of belonging.
- The care rooms had a display of medium and long-term plans on the wall. Anecdotal notes were displayed for the month of the children's observed interest. Staff explained they plan together with considerations for the children's interests.
- Real props and resources from home were available in the care rooms and provided for real life meaningful experiences encouraging exploration.
- A selection of push and pull toys, a slide, playhouse, buggies, wheelbarrow, small climbing wall, and planting area in the outdoor area provided for fundamental gross motor movements.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

A registered provider shall ensure that all reasonable measures are taken to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of a pre-school child attending the service and that the environment of the service is safe.

Compliance Information

General Safety:

- The main entrance was securely locked when the inspectors arrived with an electromagnetic lock. This prevents children from exiting unsupervised and unauthorised persons from gaining entry to the service.
- The kitchen was inaccessible to children.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely out of reach of children.
- Suitable handrails were provided for children on the staircase.
- Toys and resources provided to the children were appropriate and safe.

Infection Control:

- Children were observed washing their hands after playing in the outdoor area and before mealtimes.
- Tables were appropriately cleaned prior and following mealtimes.
- Warm running water, liquid soap and handtowels were available in the sanitary areas supporting hand hygiene.

Administration of Medication:

- Medication was stored out of reach of children. No children were observed having medication administered on the day of inspection.

Safe Sleep:

- Physical ten-minute checks were completed detailing the colour, breathing and position of sleeping children.
- Children had shoes and heavy clothing removed prior to sleep.
- Lighting in sleep rooms was at a subdued level but still allowed staff to carry out visual checks.
- The sleep rooms remained quite supporting rest for children.
- The ambient temperature of the rooms used for sleep were maintained at the recommended temperature between 18-22°C.

Fire Safety:

- Emergency exits were observed to be unobstructed.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Children aged over one were observed sat in a multi seat located on top of the changing bay without the use of straps. This posed a risk of fall and injury.
2. The press located under the kitchenette in the toddler room was not secure and failed to close correctly. This posed a pinch risk to children.

Infection Control:

3. The nappy changing procedure was observed inconsistent among staff. The procedure was not in line with best practice or the services policy which posed a risk of cross contamination. The following was observed:
 - During a nappy change staff did not change gloves after removing a soiled nappy before putting on a fresh nappy and redressing the child.
 - A staff member did not wear an apron during nappy changing.
 - A staff member wore the same apron for multiple nappy changes.
4. Exposed foam was observed on a changing mat and multi seat located in the Toddler changing bay. This posed a risk of infection.
5. The laminate covering on two presses in the Toddler room changing bay was cracked and lifted. This does not allow for sufficient cleaning and posed a risk of infection.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The provider stated that the multi-use seat has been removed.
2. The hinge on the laminate door was tightened by maintenance and staff were informed to be more aware of risks and report to management.

Infection Control:

3. The service nappy changing procedure has been reviewed and re-training completed with all staff.
4. A new mat was purchased for the nappy changing area.
5. The two doors have been replaced to ensure ample infection control measures are in place.

Summary Comment

The non-compliances identified under Regulation 23 have been addressed.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 25 - First aid

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a person trained in first aid for children is, at all times, immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service.

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that a suitably equipped first aid box for children-

(a) is safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on the premises, and

(b) is available to the children attending the pre-school service at all times.

Compliance Information

- (1) A person trained in First Aid Response (FAR) was available to children at all times as demonstrated by FAR certificates and staff roster available. Seven staff members with FAR training were present on the day of inspection.
- (2) Adequately stocked first aid boxes were available within in the care rooms. The boxes were stored out of reach of children but easily accessible if required by staff.